



A SPIRITUAL PERSON

REV. IN KEE KIM

Scripture Passage

Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit[a] of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who

does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

NRSV

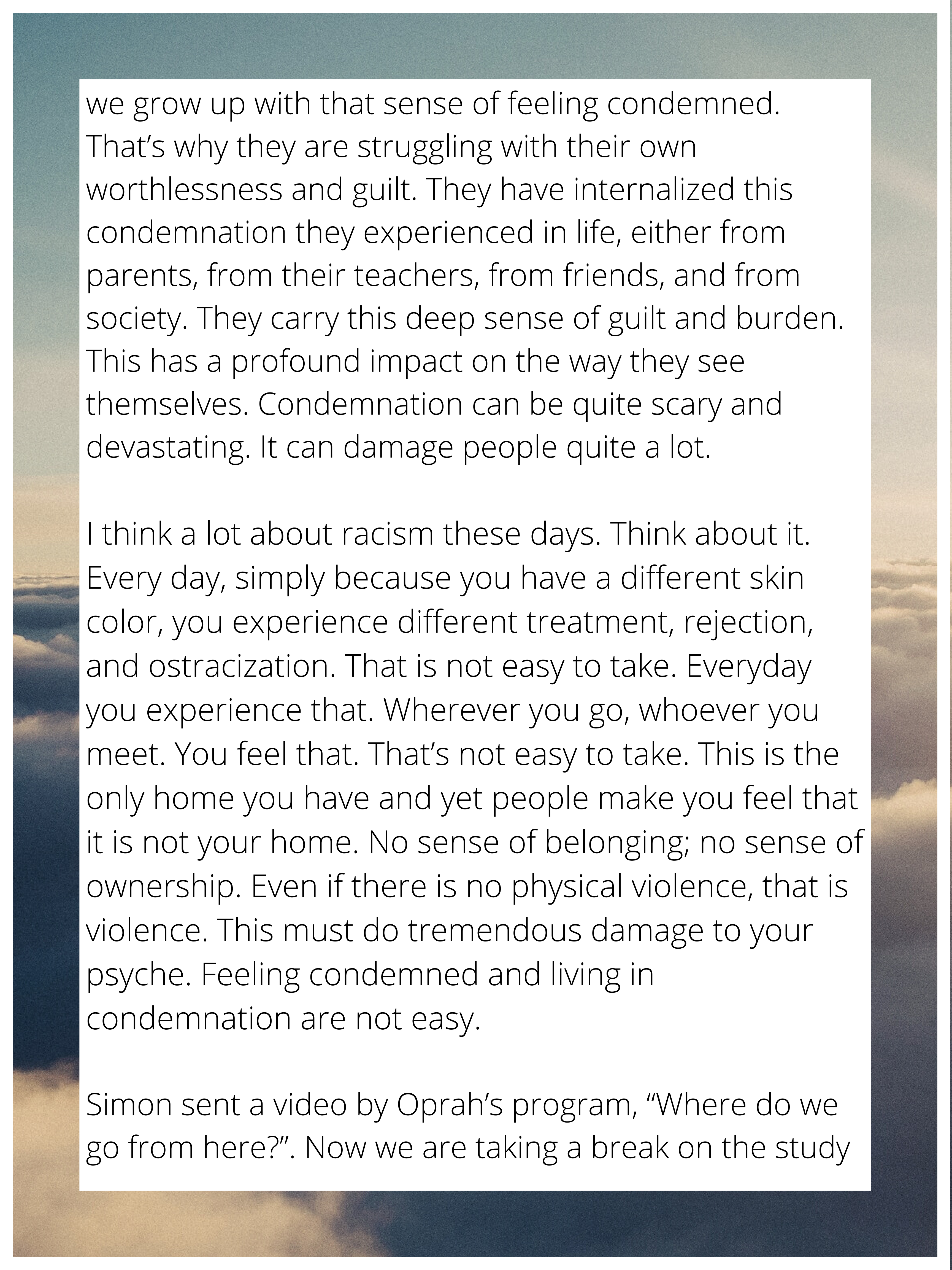
Sermon

A Spiritual Person

St. Paul said, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).*** How wonderful this statement is! No condemnation anymore in Christ Jesus. I don’t think Paul said this lightly. It came to him as a powerful realization on the road to Damascus. All his theology is centered around this sentence. ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).***

Condemnation Damages People

Condemnation is scary. It is scary and it is very ugly. I'm sure you all experienced it in your life. Condemned is like being cursed. When you are condemned, you lose confidence. You feel worthless, and that takes you to a very darkplace, where you don't want to be. I see a lot of people growing up, not feeling loved and valued but instead, they have grown up feeling condemned. That's what our society is like. Many times there is a lot of condemnation around us and so when we are young,



we grow up with that sense of feeling condemned. That's why they are struggling with their own worthlessness and guilt. They have internalized this condemnation they experienced in life, either from parents, from their teachers, from friends, and from society. They carry this deep sense of guilt and burden. This has a profound impact on the way they see themselves. Condemnation can be quite scary and devastating. It can damage people quite a lot.

I think a lot about racism these days. Think about it. Every day, simply because you have a different skin color, you experience different treatment, rejection, and ostracization. That is not easy to take. Everyday you experience that. Wherever you go, whoever you meet. You feel that. That's not easy to take. This is the only home you have and yet people make you feel that it is not your home. No sense of belonging; no sense of ownership. Even if there is no physical violence, that is violence. This must do tremendous damage to your psyche. Feeling condemned and living in condemnation are not easy.

Simon sent a video by Oprah's program, "Where do we go from here?". Now we are taking a break on the study

of Mark and we are studying racism, through the eyes of Galatians every Friday. So last we had our first meeting and he sent reference material. In that program, Ava Duvernay, she shared her experience of when she was very young. She was an American filmmaker and when she was very young, she experienced seeing how her father was thrown down to the ground in his own backyard and handcuffed and taken away. Simply because he looked like the somebody they were chasing. She saw that when she was young. Just because you have a dark skin color, if people see you with suspicious eyes, you don't feel good. When you go out, you continuously reminded that you are different.

Michelle Obama shared this beautiful video clip. It is sung by Daniel Johnson, a musician, to his daughter, during this pandemic. "I love my Black so much, so much, so much. We are strong, and we are powerful." They had to do that to protect their children from the condemnation of the world. You're black, but you're beautiful. Their parents have to remind them continuously.

God's curse is scary but human curse can be as scary. Not many people can survive the environment of

curse.

God Sets Us Free From Condemnation

Experience of condemnation leaves a deep scar within us. This deep scar will not go away easily. Time may heal it but not necessarily. We need God's help. Don't try to deal with the scar on your own. You may become somebody you don't want to be. Like an arrogant, cold, indifferent person, which you don't want to be. Ask God's help. God can help us. In Jesus Christ, we will experience freedom.

St. Paul declared boldly, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).*** When this condemnation is gone from us, we experience true freedom. This is what Paul said. ***“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Romans 8:2).*** The heavy burden of condemnation that is pressed on our neck is taken away and finally we become free. It is not the power of death that is working within us anymore. It is the power of life that lifts us up with new vitality.

Condemnation never changes us. We experience that.

It just makes us feel bad. Just telling us how wrong we are, how sinful we are, and how bad we are doesn't change us at all. It just makes us feel bad. Change doesn't happen in that way. Real change happens rather when we are free from that condemnation.

Seeing God's Grace

Being free from condemnation does not mean that you become desensitized to your sins. When you live in condemnation, you are more desensitized to your sins, because you are scared of your sins. You are scared of confronting your sins, because sin always leads to condemnation. So when you are in condemnation you are scared of sin so you become desensitized to your sin. You avoid your sins. You run away from your sins.

But when the condemnation is gone, you can face your own sins with boldness. That's why Martin Luther said, "Sin boldly". Because you can face them. Because you know that these sins will not be condemned. You have no condemnation in Jesus Christ. You will have the courage to face your own problems, sins and deal with them. You don't need to pretend that you have no sin. You don't need to run away from your sins. You don't need to pretend to be holy when you are not. You see

your sins very, very clearly, but there is something you see more clearly. That is the grace of God, that is working behind your sin. You see that more clearly. You see your sins clearly, but you see more clearly, the grace of God that is working behind you, within you.

Because spiritual people see God's grace, they can move on even though they see sins within them. Not because they are ignorant of their own sins, they see greater power, the power of grace, working within them. So they live with gratitude. They're broken and yet, they live, with this gratitude. They are completely shattered, but at the same time they have this confidence and this new vitality. Because they see their sins without the fear of condemnation. You see the depth of your sins, but you also see the depth of God's grace.

Do Not Condemn Others

We are spiritual people. We don't need to live in timidity anymore, because of people's condemnation. We can fight against the injustice, we can stand up for those who are unjustly condemned. Our job is not to condemn them. Our job is to embrace them, share the good news of Jesus Christ, and let them know that

there is no more condemnation in Christ Jesus.

When we condemn each other, we all die. But when we share God's grace, we all live. St. Paul said, ***"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you"* (Romans 8:11)**. The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead has freed us from the law of sin and death. Within us, lives the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. The Spirit works within us. The Spirit frees us from condemnation.

Confidence in God's Grace

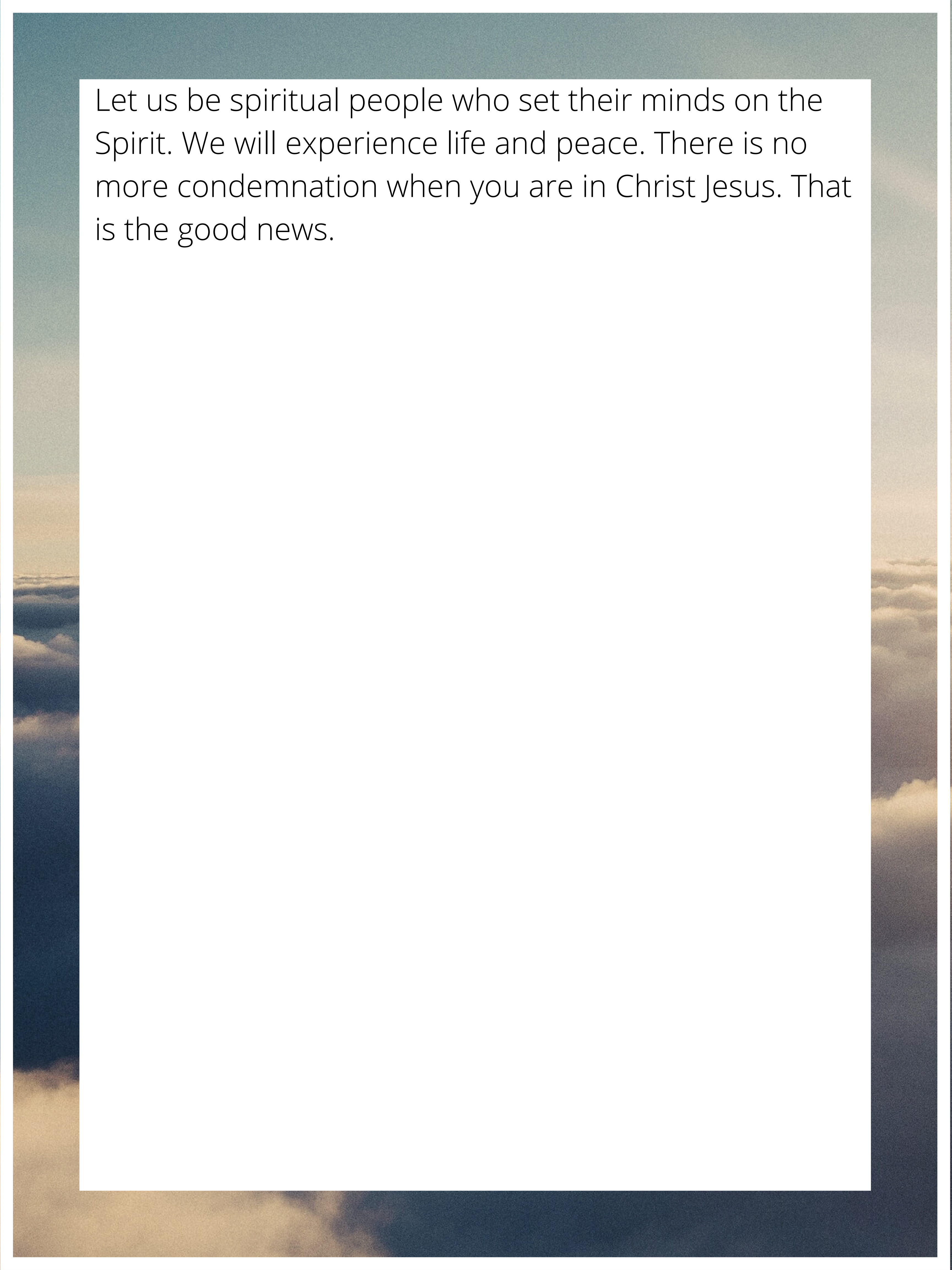
Now we can live with confidence. Not the kind of confidence that says, "I don't care." But the confidence that recognizes our own weaknesses but also recognizes that these weaknesses cannot anymore bind us and force us to live in the shadow of guilt. That is the confidence in God's grace.

When God is for us, who is against us? That was what St. Paul said in the latter part of Romans 8. He said, ***"What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"* (Romans 8:31)**. And he

continued, ***“Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us” (Romans 8:33, 34).***

It is confidence that comes from this realization. When people who have power in this world condemn you, don’t be discouraged. Usually people who have power, they condemn. When they condemn you, don’t be discouraged. When the haves of this world condemn you, don’t lose your confidence. Now with the righteousness God gives to us, we will fight for the weak, the vulnerable, and for those who are rejected and alienated.

At the end of chapter 8 of Romans, St. Paul made a beautiful statement of God’s love. ***“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Romans 8:35). “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38, 39).***



Let us be spiritual people who set their minds on the Spirit. We will experience life and peace. There is no more condemnation when you are in Christ Jesus. That is the good news.